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FOR YOUR INF.

Stirrings about training and a science information conference... meetings and workshops...visits and comments...uses of microfiche...and the usual banter make up this issue of "Inside Information."

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OCT SEMINAR SET

A couple of weeks ago, "Inside..." hinted that you should save October for an upcoming science writing seminar. Now we can reveal more details...and you'll be getting even more as time moves along. But let's back up a bit.

About 8 years ago, information folks gathered in Washington for a science communication seminar, sponsored by experiment stations and USDA. Off-hand recollections are that about 100 people attended...land-grant science writers and editors and administrators and similar people from USDA.

Expectations were set for another meeting soon after. But re-organizations, travel cuts, and so forth slowed down plans, even though the second session planners had good intentions. Involved have been Mason Miller, SEA-CR; Bill Tedrick, Texas A&M; Harold Marx, FS; Glenn Goss, Penn State; Don Wells and Terry Day, Washington State; Marci Memolo and Hal Taylor, GPA; Joe Marks, Missouri; John Heer and Sherry Bryson, Iowa State.

But persistence pays off. Now, date and place for the next meeting are set: October 22-26 at Ames, Iowa. Topical theme for the session will be "Popular Reporting of Agricultural Science: Strategies for Improvement." The program itself also is fairly well established, complete with speakers and discussion leaders.

The meeting has official sanction of the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP). There will be a registration fee. More information on registration, fees, room arrangements, etc., will be forthcoming soon in a variety of ways.

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WORKSHOPS IN ESCS

Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service (ESCS) staff has joined the parade of others in holding writing workshops. In fact, it's nothing new for ESCS.

Ben Blankenship reports that his staff has recently been holding a series of workshops to upgrade writing skills and to improve

Reserve

understanding of the ESCS publication program. Authors throughout ESCS attend, particularly newer ones and those who publish a lot. Last session in the current series is April 25.

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NAGC MOVES ONWARD

Two meetings of the National Capital Chapter of the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) will be of interest to D.C. information people. On April 17, the group will hear Len Allen, executive director of the Radio-TV News Director's Association, talk about "erosion of media first amendment rights." Then NAGC will have its annual blue pencil contest awards luncheon on May 24.

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SEEN...AND TO BE SEEN

"Inside..." contributors ran into Bob Lake and Bill Hamilton of the Forest Service the other day, squiring about six FS regional publications people through the department's cafeteria maze. Bill promises a report on some of their doings.

AMS et al regional information officers will be in town next week...April 17-20. We'll see what we can glean from them that might be of interest to you.

Jim Whorton, SEA-AR regional rep from Oakland, dropped in the other day. He's checking out better ways to target audiences, among other things. More on that later too.

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FICHE SOUNDS FISHY

The other day, Ed Poe, GPA publications distribution head, noted an advertisement of materials available on microfiche. "Interesting," he thought.

Then he saw the statement: "This is a UNIQUE compilation of INFORMATION previously available only to U.S. Government officials...."

The collection, "containing 750 microfiche and over 45,000 pages," turned out to be of USDA Agricultural Handbooks, USDA Home and Garden Bulletins, and USDA Farmers Bulletins.

All are publications in a USDA series. The latter two series are readily available through Congressmen and USDA, and often available in county Extension agents' offices or from the Cooperative Extension Services throughout the country. And, all are for sale from the Superintendent of Documents, GPO.

Projected price for the fiche collection of handbooks alone goes up to \$700.

What the heck, maybe we should forget printing and all our problems with paper!

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HOT PINK PALES

Reason last week's "Inside..." came to you on white paper was because USDA's plant had run out of pink paper. We hope you recognized the letter nevertheless.

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GA. SYMPATHIES TO
MONT.

Jack Gilchrist, Georgia Dept. of Ag., writes that he sympathizes with Sam Rosen of Montana. In Georgia, the number of copies printed and total cost of printing has to appear on the cover of all state publications. Sam, as you may recall, faces that possibility if his legislature passes a bill to that effect.

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WEBSTER RETURNS

Twelve rolls of Ektachrome, 14 rolls of Tri-X and three weeks later, GPA Director Jim Webster is back at the desk after seeing China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

He went with a USDA market development team to establish contacts for long-term trade development in China...reporting back that outlook is bright, especially for wheat, soybeans, feed grains, vegetable seeds, grass seeds, dairy cattle semen and some fruits and vegetables.

The Chinese were especially interested in exchanging experts with the private market development groups in the delegation...and at least six exchanges have been set up for the next year and a half.

Jim met with USDA attaches in Asian countries at their annual conference in Hong Kong and addressed a U.S. wheat seminar sponsored by Western Wheat, Inc., in Singapore. Flour millers and wheat buyers from throughout Asia peppered him with questions about reliability of our wheat supplies. "That left a lasting impression," he reports.

If Jim will sit still long enough to write, we're hopeful of an article or feature or two...maybe even a photo story on Chinese agriculture...assuming that he used his new Canon AE-1 satisfactorily.

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NE ACE AT GULL LAKE

Mark Allen, Mich. State, writes that plans are final for the May 2-4 NE ACE conference. It will be held at the Gull Lake Conference Center, 12 miles northwest of Battle Creek and 15 miles northeast of Kalamazoo.

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PERIODICALS REPORT
MADE

The periodical task force report is in. Among recommendations are that all agency and overall departmental information activities be reviewed and evaluated at set intervals...say every three years.

Included would be a strengthened approval procedure and a rigorous review of periodicals with attention to:

- A. Does publication have an objective and if so how well is it being met?
- B. Is the subject matter and its treatment in line with the objective?
- C. Is the circulation adequate in number and makeup to meet the objective?
- D. Do results justify total cost of the publication (total article preparation, and editorial and administrative costs as well as printing and mailing costs should be included)?

E. Is the publication primarily in-house or aimed at an outside and broader audience?

F. Agencies ought to be prepped for such a review and conduct one of their own before submitting their request to GPA and OMB.

The task force consisted of Mason Miller, SEA-CR; Noland Kegley, FmHA; Jim McMahon, ASCS; Jim Parks, APHIS; and Stan Prochaska, AMS. As soon as possible, copies of their report will be circulated to agencies.

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ASSUMING PUNS
ARE FUN...

Latest balderdash to come "Inside's..." way is announcement of the Puns Corps, billed as a non-official association for the improvement of government jargon and the elimination of unintended ambiguities in writing...especially in government prose.

The Pun Corps sponsors a One-Tooth-Rhee Landing Day each Jan. 23 to encourage alertness of editors and others to the similarity in sound of "1-2-3" to One-Tooth-Rhee.

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PROCUREMENT SECTION
SUBMITTAL RECORDS

Other homegrown folklore of "burro-crazy" is studied and offered for its memory-aid value and/or picturesqueness as an aid to vivid writing. Publications include an Outline for the One-Pager; Hara Kiri Guide for Editors and Publishers; and Fallout from the Course Poems, Puzzles, Puns and Paradox.

If you want to get overwhelmed with such stuff, write Robert L. Birch, Box 2364, Falls Church, Va. 22042. Bob also works in the Library, Room 1052 South Bldg. If you just can't wait for more material, call him at (202) 447-3434.

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IDAHO-WASH. SKY TALK

New copy of Open Line, Scott Fedale's Idaho newsletter, contains an interesting item about PET (Portable Earth Terminal). PET is a 35-foot bus equipped with a television studio, control room and satellite transmitting and receiving equipment. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has loaned the equipment to a regional medical education program in Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho (WAMI).

WAMI has stationary satellite terminals in Seattle, at the Univ. of Alaska in Fairbanks and at Montana State Univ. The portable terminal brings satellite communications to other sites, giving them access to the communications technology satellite.

Recent broadcasts have featured medical school reps in Seattle and public officials and physicians in the WAMI states, including a couple of Idaho legislators and four med students and the director of the WAMI program in Seattle. Other locations using the PET in recent months to communicate with Seattle include Pullman and American Falls. PET is tentatively scheduled to visit Billings, Moscow, and Pullman in June.